

Washington, D.C. — Today, Reps. Steve Israel (D-NY) and Tom Cole (R-OK) called on Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi to refrain from giving Hamas cover to intensify its attacks by allowing Egyptian delegations to visit Gaza, to stop issuing inflammatory statements that contribute to the escalation of violence, and to continue to abide by the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty. Israel had agreed to a temporary cease-fire during Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Kandil's visit to Gaza, but Hamas fired at Israel anyway, breaching this agreement and providing cover to Hamas to fire rockets when Israel agreed not to respond.

Below is the full letter from the Representatives:

November 19, 2012

The Honorable Mohammed Morsi

President

The Arab Republic of Egypt

c/o Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt

3521 International CT NW

Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear President Morsi,

We write to you with concern for the ongoing rocket fire into Israel perpetrated by Hamas and other terrorist factions within the Gaza Strip. Over 800 rockets have been fired at Israel within the past week, roughly 1,600 within the past year, and more than 8,600 since Israel fully withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

We strongly urge that you continue to work to de-escalate this conflict and advise Hamas to stop its rocket attacks on Israel as soon as possible, but fear that your recent actions and statements are doing just the opposite.

Israel agreed to a temporary cease fire during the duration of Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Kandil's visit to Gaza last Friday only to be met with a barrage of 50 rockets that struck Israel as soon as the visit began. By Israel agreeing to halt its operation, Prime Minister Kandil's visit gave Hamas cover to intensify its own. This is unacceptable. In addition, by denouncing Israel and withdrawing the Egyptian Ambassador to Israel you are raising the temperature of this conflict and contributing to the escalation of violence.

Prime Minister Kandil's visit has also encouraged other Egyptian politicians and activists to send similar delegations to Gaza. By allowing Egyptians to cross into a battle zone, you are putting your citizens at risk and will ultimately be held responsible for their well-being. We expect Egypt to keep its commitments under its peace treaty with Israel under all circumstances and hope that your efforts will be used to restrain Hamas rather than to further escalate the conflict.

Serious leadership is needed to resolve this crisis. Once again, we urge you to refrain from giving Hamas cover to intensify its attacks and issuing inflammatory statements; and we expect you to continue to abide by the Egypt-Israel peace treaty.

Sincerely,

STEVE ISRAEL

TOM COLE

Member of Congress

Member of Congress